No. 80-251

IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER TERM, 1980

BERNARD ROSTKER, Director of Selective Service,
Appellant,

v.

ROBERT L. GOLDBERG, *et al.*,
Appellees.

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

AMICUS CURIAE BRIEF OF STACEY ACKER, CHRISTINA ANDRES, KATHRYN BARR, ALMEDA CANNON, ELIZABETH CREMERS, MONICA DEWIT, MARY DOLEHIDE, ESTHER GLUCKSMAN, ANNA HARRINGTON, LAURA HEADLEE, CORLISS JARRETT, KAREN JOHNSON, PAM PATRICK, FELICITY SMITH, KATHLEEN SULLIVAN and AGNES ZEPEDA

NATHAN LEWIN
JAMES E. ROCAP, III
MILLER, CASSIDY,
LARROCA & LEWIN
2555 M Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 293-6400
Attorneys for
Stacey Acker, et al.

Washington, D.C. • THIEL PRESS • (202) 638-4521

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Stacey Acker and fifteen other female citizens of the United States between the ages of 18 and 26, pursuant to Rule 36 of the Rules of this Court, present this brief on behalf of themselves and millions of other women who will be vitally affected by the disposition of this case. The Solicitor General and counsel for appellees have consented to the filing of this brief. *See* Exhibits A and B.

INTEREST OF THE AMICUS CURIAE

The direct interest of the *amici* in this litigation is plain. Each will be directly affected by the decision of this Court, and all represent the interests of millions of other similarly situated women who will also be directly affected by that decision. If the decision of the district court is affirmed, women will, for the first time in the history of the United States, become subject to registration and induction into the Armed Forces.[1] Despite the possibility of this unprecedented result, there is *no* party to this litigation who represents the interests of *any* woman, or who has made arguments reflective of the interests of women in the outcome of this case. Plaintiffs represent solely their own interests as males subject to registration and induction. That interest is directly contrary to the interests of the *amici* and all women in the continuation of women's historical exemption from registration and induction. The government represents its own interests, which it has framed solely in terms of military efficiency. In fact, the Executive Branch has put itself on record as favoring the registration and induction of women. Thus, the *amici* remain wholly unrepresented in this litigation.

Each of the *amici* believes, for varying reasons with broad societal significance, that Congress acted properly in continuing the historical exemption for women from draft registration and induction found in the Military Selective Service Act, 50 U.S.C. App. §§451 et seq. (herein-

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[1] In the event that the statute at issue, the Military Selective Service Act (MSSA), 50 U.S.C. App. §§451, *et. seq.*, is declared unconstitutional because it is not gender-neutral, Congress will have no choice but quickly to re-enact the MSSA to include women as registrants and possible inductees. The interest of the amici in this case is, therefore, direct and immediate.

after "MSSA").[2] They express concerns about the impact of registering and inducting women that represent the broad spectrum of public opinion recently presented

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[2] As described in our Motion to Intervene in this Court, these *amici* sought to intervene in *Barnett v. Rostker*, No. 80-1578 (D.D.C., complaint filed June 26, 1980), and alleged the following:

(1) Stacey Acker is a female resident of Alabama and a citizen of the United States. She was born on September 7, 1960. Miss Acker hopes to marry and have children. Registration and potential induction into military service would hinder and disrupt these plans. Miss Acker believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because women should not be conscripted during their best child-bearing years and because women who are mothers have a greater responsibility to care for their small children than to engage in military service.

(2) Christina Andres is a female resident of Florida and a citizen of the United States. She was born on November 28, 1960. Miss Andres does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she is not prepared to be assigned to military combat. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because compulsory induction will necessarily lead to assignment to the battlefield, no matter what the job is labelled.

(3) Kathryn Barr is a female resident of Wisconsin and a citizen of the United States. She was born on May 9, 1960. Miss Barr has engaged in competitive sports and knows that she cannot compete successfully against males in any contest which requires upperbody strength. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because women are unable to match men in this important physical characteristic, which may be a matter of life or death in military combat.

(4) Almeda Cannon is a female resident of Tennessee and a citizen of the United States. She was born on January 27, 1962. Miss Cannon does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she fears sexual abuse. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because of the great potential for sexual abuse if women were inducted, as described in Congressional hearings conducted last year.

(5) Elizabeth Cremers is a female resident of Illinois and a citizen of the United States. She was born on June 5, 1961. Miss Cremers does not want to serve in the Armed Forces

[footnote continued]

to Congress as part of its decision-making process on whether to remove the exemption for women presently

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because she does not want to be responsible for endangering men who serve with her, particularly in combat situations, who might instinctively protect her while jeopardizing their military missions. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that, as a result of instinct and training, many male members of the Armed Forces would not be able to treat women as equals in military situations.

(6) Monica Dewit is a female resident of New Jersey and a citizen of the United States. She was born on June 4, 1962. Miss Dewit does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she fears that if she were ever captured by the enemy, she could not survive as a prisoner of war. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that if women were inducted into the military and were ever captured in actual conflict, they would be subject to much worse treatment than men.

(7) Mary Dolehide is a female resident of Illinois and a citizen of the United States. She was born on September 5, 1962. Miss Dolehide does not want to register and serve in the Armed Forces because she knows, from having heard the public testimony of Defense Department officials, that there are few practical restraints on the kinds of duties to which the Army may assign female inductees and because certain assignments, particulary those in combat zones, are tasks she cannot and will not perform. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it knew that, if inducted, women might be deployed by the Army in combat zones.

(8) Esther Glucksman is a female resident of New York and a citizen of the United States. She was born on January 24, 1960. Miss Glucksman does not want to register and serve in the Armed Forces because she cannot participate in compulsory military service in any capacity, including alternative civilian service, without violating her religious principles, based on Orthodox Jewish law relating to modesty by women ("tznius"), as authoritatively prescribed by rabbinic decision. She believes that Congress properly exempted

[footnote continued]

found in the MSSA. Their interest in presenting these arguments to the Court is to ensure that this Court's

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women from registration and compulsory military service because it knew that many women in the United States have religious scruples against compulsory service relating particularly to their status as women.

(9) Anna Harrington is a female resident of Virginia and a citizen of the United States. She was born on June 12, 1962. Miss Harrington does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she believes that combat and other tasks performed by those in military service are, by tradition and by actual performance, more capably done by men than by women. She knows that she cannot engage in actual combat with enemy male troops, and she believes that women in military service will endanger not only their own lives but those of other soldiers. Miss Harrington believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that men can fight and do military jobs better than women.

(10) Laura Headlee is a female resident of Michigan and a citizen of the United States. She was born on March 13, 1961. Miss Headlee does not want to register and serve in the Armed Forces because doing so would conflict with her beliefs, based upon her upbringing and religious background, that men are responsible for protecting the country and women are responsible for maintaining the home and caring for the family. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it knew that many women in the United States would find military service, in any capacity, to be an infringement upon their rights of conscience and free exercise of religion.

(11) Corliss Jarrett is a female resident of Tennessee and a citizen of the United States. She was born on February 11, 1962. Miss Jarrett is the mother of a baby, and she has no husband. She does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she will not be able adequately to care for her child while she is in military service. Miss Jarrett believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that single mothers of small children are more greatly needed to care for

[footnote continued]

focus is not solely on the impact that a gender-neutral draft law would have on military efficiency, but also on

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their children than are single fathers, and that even the uncertainty of possible induction would disrupt the upbringing of these children.

(12) Karen Johnson is a female resident of Tennessee and a citizen of the United States. She was born on October 21, 1960. Miss Johnson does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because her right of privacy would be violated in military life, which is governed by male culture, and which accepts body contact, foul language, and personally offensive remarks which she, as a lady, finds obnoxious. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that involuntary induction into the Armed Forces would subject many women in the United States to invasions of privacy and mental suffering relating directly to their identity and self-image as females.

(13) Pam Patrick is a female resident of North Carolina and a citizen of the United States. She was born on April 4, 1961. Miss Patrick does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because her upbringing as a Christian woman has taught her that women should produce life, not destroy it. She believes that she cannot be trained to kill, even if she were never actually assigned to combat duty. She also fears physical injury which might result from training or combat. Miss Patrick believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that many women in the United States would be unable, by reason of their upbringing as women and their feminine self-image, to participate in any way in a governmental function dedicated to the destruction of human life, and that physical disfiguration would be much more devastating to women than to men.

(14) Felicity Smith is a female resident of Missouri and a citizen of the United States. She was born on January 30, 1960. Miss Smith does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she would find intolerable the lack of privacy in daily military life, particularly the dressing, bathing, toilet and sleeping facilities. These aspects of military life are

[footnote continued]

the impact such a law would have on society. To date, because of the limited spectrum of parties in this litigation, the latter impact has been wholly ignored. But only with this dual focus by the Court, on both military efficiency and societal impact, can a fully informed decision be made.

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contrary to her nature as a woman and to the personal behavior and habits which are part of her feminine nature. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because it recognized that many women in the United States would be unable to accept the military's infringements on privacy which would conflict with values with which they were raised.

(15) Kathleen Sullivan is a female resident of Illinois and a citizen of the United States. She was born on May 8, 1958. Miss Sullivan is engaged to be married to a man who has completed his military service. Her prospective husband would, therefore, not be subject to induction. The possibility that Miss Sullivan would be subject to involuntary induction would have a drastic effect on the prospective family's plans to have children. Miss Sullivan believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because even the possibility of involuntary induction of women would seriously affect the personal family decisions of many married couples.

(16) Agnes Zepeda is a female resident of Washington and a citizen of the United States. She was born on October 5, 1959. She does not want to serve in the Armed Forces because she knows, from having grown up with brothers in the family, that she is unable to equal men in performing tasks which require physical strength and agility, and she does not want the national defense to depend on her ability to perform physically taxing jobs. She believes that Congress properly exempted women from registration and compulsory military service because Congress knows that most tasks to be performed by military service would be done better by men than by women.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Because the function of an *amicus curiae* is to provide additional relevant perspectives and arguments to the Court, our argument will focus on the substantive reasons, other than military efficiency, that provide ample constitutional support for the exemption of women from draft registration and induction. We also will not address the question of burden of proof, which is adequately treated by the parties, although we believe that the military context of the plaintiffs' challenge substantially increases the deference that the judiciary should exercise in reviewing this Congressional decision.

Substantively, Congress based its decision to continue the male-only draft on various concerns, including "important societal reasons" such as "unprecedented strains on family life." The impact on society of reversing the long-accepted decision that women should not be *obligated* to serve in the armed forces is directly related to this country's national resolve necessary to a successful defense posture. It is not only legitimate but compelling for Congress to be concerned that such resolve not be weakened by forcing the public to accept a draft registration and induction system that would be unpalatable to the citizenry. Testimony was provided to the Congress to justify such a conclusion, and Congress found, on the basis of this testimony and its own common-sense judgments, that discontinuing the exclusion of women from registration and induction might endanger the entire draft system.

Historically, Congress has made its decisions regarding who should serve in the armed forces by considering not only military concerns, but also the economic, social and psychological needs of the American public. Deferments for clergy, students, married persons, and others

traditionally have found their justification not in military necessity but in other societal needs and concerns. The traditional exemption of women is no different. It grows out of societal concerns about the family unit, the nature of war and its impact on women, and the adverse circumstances necessarily imposed on women in the armed forces. It is both legitimate and compelling for Congress to rely upon these concerns in determining that the country's selective service system should be all-male rather than gender-neutral.

Women's exemption from the MSSA does not perpetuate sexual stereotypes of inferiority, nor does it encourage unequal privileges because of supposedly unequal responsibility. The military laws of the United States give ample opportunity to women to volunteer for service in the armed forces. In fact, women have traditionally volunteered in numbers sufficient to fulfill the armed forces' utilization of service women. There is no challenge here to the armed forces' present limited use of women. Nor is there any claim that the armed forces need more women than have volunteered. Because women are currently fulfilling the needs of the armed forces, and in fact are being encouraged to do so by the government, the possibility of reinforcement of "unequal privileges for unequal responsibilities" is not realistic, nor is it sanctioned by law. Indeed, the Congressional attitude toward women in the military has been increasingly to *encourage* their voluntary participation in military service, thereby undercutting any continuation of outmoded stereotypical attitudes toward women.

The lower court erred in completely ignoring these bases for the Congressional decision to continue the historical exemption for women. It improperly analyzed the constitutionality of the all-male draft in isolation

from the social context in which any system of military conscription must take place. Such assessments of the broad social impact of a decision to draft women are within the unique province of Congress to make and are not for the courts to ignore, especially where, as here, questions of our national defense and Congress' power under Article I, §8 are concerned.

In light of Congress' concern about the broad societal impact of a decision to discontinue the exemption for women from the draft, and the compelling and legitimate nature of that concern, its continuation of a draft limited to males was totally justified under any appropriate constitutional standard.

ARGUMENT

CONGRESS WAS LEGITIMATELY AND APPROPRIATELY UNWILLING, FOR SOCIETAL REASONS, TO WITHDRAW THE HISTORICAL EXEMPTION OF WOMEN FROM THE MSSA

For the first time in the history of this country, and contrary to the decision of every court that has ever faced the question,[3] the district court in this case has determined that the country's male-only registration and induction system, designed "to raise and support Armies" and "to maintain and support a Navy," Art. I., §8, is

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[3] *See, United States v. Reiser*, 532 F.2d 673 (9th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 429 U.S. 838 (1976); *United States v. Baechler*, 509 F.2d 13 (4th Cir. 1974), *cert. denied*, 421 U.S. 993 (1975), *United States v. Camara*, 451 F.2d 1122 (1st Cir. 1971), *cert. denied*, 405 U.S. 1074 (1972); *United States v. Fallon*, 407 F.2d 621 (7th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 395 U.S. 908 (1969); *Kovach v. Middendorf*, 424 F.Supp. 72 (D. Del. 1976); *United States v. Offord*, 373 F.Supp. 1117 (E.D. Wis. 1974); *United States v. Yingling*, 368 F.Supp. 379 (W.D. Pa. 1973); *United States v. Dorris*, 319 F.Supp. 1306 (W.D. Pa. 1970); *United States v. Cook*, 311 F.Supp. 618 (W.D. Pa. 1970); *United States v. Clinton*, 310 F.Supp. 333 (E.D. La. 1970); *Suskin v. Nixon*, 304 F.Supp. 71 (N.D. Ill. 1969).

unconstitutional because it is not gender-neutral. In doing so, the court made two fundamental errors which require reversal of the decision. *First,* and foremost, the court totally failed to consider the Congressional concern for the broad *societal* impact that removal of the exemption would have. It erroneously posed the determinative question as whether "there is a substantial relationship between the exclusion of women and the raising of effective armed forces" (Juris. St. App. 21a) thereby omitting consideration of any legislative policy concerns other than the "raising of effective armed forces." *Second,* it reached its holding in part by determining that the MSSA constitutes gender discrimination and is a "badge of inferiority" which in fact "relegate[s] women to an inferior status."[4] Juris. St. App. 15a. Both errors fatally infect the court's reasoning and holding.

A. Congress Traditionally Has Considered Societal Impact – Not Just Military Needs – In Determining Who Should Be Called Upon For Military Service

Before proceeding to Congress' recent consideration and rejection of a proposal for a gender-neutral MSSA, it is helpful to survey the recent history of the draft system and particularly those exemptions and deferments that have been granted by Congress. For the MSSA is not

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[4]This determination followed, in part, from the repeated mischaracterization of the effect of female draft exemption as the "exclusion" of women, occasionally without adding that women are being "excluded" from the *duty* of registration. *See, e.g.,* Juris. St. App. 2a, 20a, 21a, 24a. Compare Juris. St. App. 12a, 38a-39a, 43a. The effect of the law is not, of course, to "exclude" women from anything other than an obligation to register—a form of discrimination that is ordinarily described as an "exemption" rather than an "exclusion."

now, nor has it ever been, universal in its imposition of obligations on residents of the United States. The MSSA has always been, as its name implies, *selective;* contrary to the repeated assertions of the plaintiffs here, not *all* men are required to register and not *all* men are required to serve. Instead, Congress has considered the military needs of the country, balanced those along with the country's other economic and societal needs, added considerations of equity and fairness, and has arrived at periodic judgments as to who should be required to serve in the military, in what order and manner, and at what point in their lives.

The district court framed the question before it in the following terms (Juris. St. App. 21a):

> To summarize, we need only decide if there is a substantial relationship between the exclusion of women and the raising of effective armed forces.

If this were the real question, there would be little basis – substantial, rational or otherwise – for excluding *anyone* from registration and induction. But the modern MSSA, since its inception in 1948, has, with very minor variations, limited registration and possible induction to males between the ages of 18 and 26. Act of June 24, 1948, Pub. L. 759, 62 Stat. 604; Act of June 19, 1951, Pub. L. 51, 65 Stat. 75; Act of June 30, 1967, Pub. L. 90-40, 81 Stat. 100. What justification is there for a restriction of draft-eligible males to this category? The most obvious is that individuals in this age group can be removed, with least social disruption, from their civilian environments and compelled to perform national service. The fact that 18-to-26 year olds are likely to be in better physical condition than 27-to-35 year olds, or that they are likely to have more mature judgment than 14-to-17 year olds are not, by any means, the sole, or even

principal reasons why *all* individuals under 18 or over 26 are exempt. In setting the age limits, Congress considered that persons over the age of 26 are more likely to contribute to a productive national economy,[5] and that they ordinarily will have more dependents and have greater family responsibilities than those between the ages of 18 and 26. This basic societal decision controlled draft registration policy uninterruptedly since World War II, if not during the entire modern era.

Similarly, the MSSA since 1948, without amendment, has exempted from induction "regular or duly ordained ministers of religion, and students preparing for the ministry." *See* Act of June 24, 1948, Pub. L. 759, 62 Stat. 604, §6(g); 50 U.S.C. App. §456(g). Indeed, ministers of religion have been exempt from induction throughout the entire modern era. *See* S. Rep. No. 1268, 80th Cong. 2d Sess. 13 (May 12, 1948). And yet, there is no apparent *military* reason or basis for exempting ministers of religion from induction and service in the armed forces. This traditional deferment rests upon a societal judgment that such persons should not be legally obligated to serve in the armed forces. Ministry students and clergymen, as well as men over 26, have been permitted to volunteer for military service – just as women have throughout the modern era. But Congress has never deemed it appropriate to *require* service of ministers or those who are over-age, and the reasons go far beyond military necessity.

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[5] Senate Report No. 117 to the 1951 Universal Military Training and Service Act, 65 Stat. 75, explained that "the older the man, the more deeply his roots are sunk in community life, and the more likely his civilian activities would be of greater value than military service." S. Rep. No. 117, 82d Cong. 1st Sess. 8 (Feb. 21, 1951).

Deferments based upon other societal, as opposed to military, reasons have always been a part of our country's selective service system.[6] Thus in 1948 Congress recognized (S. Rep. No. 1268, *supra* at p. 5):

> the vital importance of maintaining our critical manpower resources to the fullest possible extent. Many groups – scientists, research workers, medical practitioners, engineers, industrial workers, to name but a few – make up the complex structure of our national life. All of these groups are important. The maintenance of a flow of persons into these groups is equally important.

Congress therefore created a "National Security Resources Board" to "determine what policies are necessary to best utilize our manpower resources, and prevent their wasteful depletion." *Ibid.* It authorized the President to defer from military service all individuals whose continued employment is "found to be necessary to the maintenance of the national health, safety and interest." 50 U.S.C. App. §456.

Perhaps the most controversial deferment has been for students engaged in higher education. Special treatment for students endured through two wars and approximately 25 years of the MSSA. The Senate Report on the 1948 Act, quoted earlier, recognized the counterbalancing need to maintain "a flow of persons" into

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[6] Conscientious objectors also receive deferments from active duty in the military. This reflects a societal judgment that sincere believers should not be required to do that which their consciences condemn. The critical question is not one of military efficiency, and the exemption of each conscientious objector increases the risk of induction of an otherwise eligible male. But because of a *societal* determination, that inequity has been implemented by Congress.

highly educated professions. That judgment, recognized in part in the Congressionally-sanctioned deferment of college and university students, was reaffirmed in 1951, and again after substantial debate in 1967. *See* Act of June 30, 1967, 81 Stat. 102, §6. Throughout this period, the focus of Congressional concern was the societal disruption that might result in the absence of such a deferment.[7]

Finally, and most directly relevant here, Congress consistently has considered the impact of the draft laws on the family unit. Thus, since 1948 the President has been authorized to defer from induction "any or all categories

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[7]In 1967, after being presented with a recommendation for the abolition of student deferments, the House Committee on Armed Services rejected the proposal, stating:

> Aside from these arguments raising questions of equity which, in the view of the overwhelming majority of the Committee on Armed Services, are without basis in fact, the committee believes that a continuation of college student deferments is clearly in the national interest. This view is well expressed in a statement received by the committee from the Executive Director of the Scientific Manpower Commission who, in testifying before the committee, said:
>
> > If we abolish student deferment, taking in by random selection at age 19 all those men who are needed, we would take about half the age group now deferred as students. This means that we would take about half of those who will ultimately become our doctors, our lawyers, our college professors, our research scientists, our graduate engineers, and other specialists. These men would have completed their military obligation before they attained their professional training. Where, then, would we get our service doctors, military lawyers, and the many other specialists whose work requires graduate training?

H.R. Rep. No. 267, 90th Cong. 1st Sess. 23-24 (May 18, 1967).

of persons in a status with respect to persons dependent upon them for support which renders their deferment advisable," and further, "to provide for the deferments . . . of any or all categories of persons who have wives or children, or wives and children, and with whom they maintain a bona fide family relationship in their homes." Act of June 24, 1948, 62 Stat. 612, §6(h). *See* 50 U.S.C. App. §456(h). This deferment authority has remained virtually unchallenged since the inception of the post-war MSSA. Yet the exemption of persons with families decreases the pool available for induction, thereby increasing the risk of induction to other eligible males. The reason for the deferment is societal, not military. It is based upon a judgment that the integrity of the family unit should be maintained to the extent possible, even in war time.[8]

Our purpose in discussing these various deferments and exemptions, and their rationale, is not to justify their existence, or to endorse the policies underlying all of them. They demonstrate, however, that the MSSA is a "selective" mechanism for determining who should be compelled to serve in the nation's armed forces, and that Congress' selectivity is frequently based on reasons having nothing to do with miliary efficiency or preparedness. Challenges to Congressional determinations in this area of the MSSA have been uniformly rejected. *See, e.g., United States v. Fallon,* 407 F.2d 621, 623 (7th Cir.),

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[8]In 1975, a new deferment was added for those persons who come from families which have had other family members captured or missing in action. 50 U.S.C. App. §456(o). This, too, is not a judgment based on military necessity. It is an equitable decision that a family which has suffered one loss should not be forced to risk a second.

cert. denied, 395 U.S. 908 (1969) ("Congress was entitled to consider factors which would . . . minimize the disruption of what were considered important civilian functions"); *Smith v. United States,* 424 F.2d 267 (9th Cir. 1970); *Liese v. Local Board 102,* 314 F.Supp. 521, 523 (E.D. Mo. 1970) (rejecting a challenge to the "sole surviving son" deferment), *aff'd on other grounds,* 440 F.2d 645 (8th Cir. 1971); *Talmanson v. United States,* 386 F.2d 811, 812 (1st Cir. 1967). The error of the district court here was its premise that Congress must relate its selection process to military needs only. This ignores the established and fundamental character of the MSSA and misapprehends its purpose. The true question in this case is, therefore, whether societal reasons justify, under the appropriate constitutional standard, Congress' conclusion that men should be subject to compulsory service, while women should serve in the armed forces only if they volunteer. We believe that the legislative record and common experience unequivocally support Congress' conclusion.

B. Congress Was Legitimately Concerned Over the Societal Impact of the Compulsory Induction of Women.

Congress explicitly noted that its recent rejection of the Executive Branch proposal to make the military draft gender-neutral was based not only upon its "assessment of the military needs of the nation," but also upon its assessment of "the societal impact of the registration and possible induction of women." S. Rep. No. 96-826, 96th Cong. 2d Sess. 157 (June 20, 1980). After assessing the military reasons for continuing the exemption, the Senate Committee on Armed Services then explained at length its concern over the societal impact of registering and inducting women:

> Finally, the Committee finds that there are important societal reasons for not changing our present male-only system of registration and induction. The question of who should be required to fight for the Nation and how best to accomplish that end is a social issue of the highest order, with sweeping implications for our society. In addition to the military reasons, which the Committee finds compelling, witnesses representing a variety of groups testified before the subcommittee that drafting women would place unprecedented strains on family life, whether in peacetime or in time of emergency. If such a draft occurred at a time of emergency, unpredictable reactions to the fact of female conscription would result. A decision which would result in a young mother being drafted and a young father remaining home with the family in a time of national emergency cannot be taken lightly, nor its broader implications ignored. The Committee is strongly of the view that such a result, which would occur if women were registered and inducted under the administration plan, is unwise and unacceptable to a large majority of our people.

Id. at 159.

Although the Committee spoke of various "societal reasons," it specified one primary concern—"the strains on family life that would result from the registration and possible induction of women." *Id.* at 161. This general conclusion was supported by the statement of the States Catholic Conference in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel that "the disruptive effects of [enacting a gender-neutral MSSA] on several dimensions of our social fabric outweigh the benefits which could be achieved by these measures," with particular reference to "the traditional concern of Catholic bishops and all Christian pastors . . . with

the welfare of the family." Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Manpower Personnel, Senate Committee on Armed Services on S.2294, 96th Cong. 2d Sess. 1706-1707. (R. 993-997). A similar position was taken by the Orthodox Jewish Coalition on Registration of Women for the Selective Service System:

> Furthermore, we believe that the inclusion of women in the Selective Service System would irreparably subvert the family unit in America, which is already battered and in grave danger. The American family, with the woman as its stabilizing element, would suffer a severe disruption. Registration of women would engender a rootlessness and a moral decimation in American society which can cause a more radical change than would an invading army.

Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Manpower Personnel, Senate Committee on Armed Services on S.2294, 96th Cong. 2d Sess. 1716 (R. 1016). Dr. Harold Voth of the Menninger Foundation, testifying before the House Subcommittee on Military Personnel in November 1979, expressed concern over the impact of increased use of women in the military, and particularly its adverse effect on the family. See also the remarks of Congresswoman Holt. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, House Armed Services Committee, 96th Cong. 1st Sess. 63-70 (unpublished).

The threat to "family life" which was feared by Congress and by the witnesses who testified against expanding the draft to include women is not a mere imprecise generalization. The legal obligation to register and be subject to induction produces uncertainty; the individual subject to the legal obligation and those dependent upon that individual cannot be sure that he or she

will continue in whatever voluntary civilian surrounding he or she chooses. This uncertainty – insofar as it affects the family – has a much more severe impact if women are subject to the legal obligation than if it is limited to men.

First, only women can become pregnant and bear children. Even slight uncertainty as to when and how she will be required to fulfill a draft obligation can seriously affect a woman's plans in this regard. A prospective father's absence from his home surroundings is acceptable, even if not desirable; a mother-to-be may not want to carry her pregnancy while in military service.

Second, the potential absence of a mother from a home is still more likely to be disruptive than the potential absence of a father. Family unity – or even family planning – will be much more adversely affected by the fear that a mother may be called away for national service than by an equivalent fear regarding a father. This difference was graphically demonstrated by Senator Nunn when, in the course of Congressional hearings, he was told that under the Executive Branch's proposal, mothers might be drafted, leaving fathers to care for the children and the home:

> You are going to be drafting women, not putting them in combat, but putting them in the military service and perhaps leaving their husbands at home to take care of the children. Anyone who thinks this society is prepared for that kind of shock is either operating in a different environment than I am or in a dream world.

Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Manpower Personnel, Senate Committee on Armed Services on S.2294, 96th Cong. 2d Sess. 1691 (R. 969).

Third, even where children are not a factor, the wife's actual or potential extended absence from the home is more likely, under contemporary norms, to impose an unacceptable strain on the family unit.

These concerns cannot readily be dismissed as the "outmoded baggage of sexual stereotypes." Few would question the value that the family unit provides to our national life, both in peacetime and in war. To dismiss Congressional attempts to ensure a continuation of the benefits of the family unit as "sexual stereotyping" misses the point, for it is vitally important to the national resolve to minimize strains on that unit. The historical exemption of women from the draft has ensured a certainty to the family unit that would not otherwise be there. Couples with children know, for example, that the mother can choose to remain with the children, no matter what the emergency. Subjecting women to the draft, however, would remove that confidence. *See* Testimony of Bernard Rostker, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Manpower Personnel, Senate Committee on Armed Services on S.2294, 96th Cong. 2d Sess. 1691. (R. 968-969). The value of that certainty cannot be emphasized enough, and its continuation was a legitimate and compelling reason for Congress to exempt women from the obligations of the MSSA.

Legitimate gender-related concerns other than those centering on the family also justify limiting *involuntary* military service to men. The *amici* have expressed many of these concerns in their petition to intervene filed in *Barnett v. Rostker,* D.D.C. No. 80-1578, as specified in note 2, *supra.* We believe that large numbers of women in this country share those views, and they are known to the Congress. Specifically, it remains a fact that women are less accustomed to, and less willing to accept

the invasions of personal privacy which are a hallmark of military life than are men. As a result of religious training or family upbringing, many more women than men have ingrained feelings of modesty which are irreconcilable with military life. It is also a fact that in our contemporary society women have more reason to fear sexual abuse than do men, and the opportunities for such abuse are heightened when individuals are removed from ordinary civilian society and gathered onto military bases. Similarly undeniable is the fact that millions of women in this country – as well as millions of men – view military combat, and all the activities which support and surround military combat, as repugnant and inappropriate to the female gender.

Congress is not constitutionally obliged to disregard the overwhelming sentiment in the nation that a difference between the sexes is justified in the area of military service. Indeed, an accurate measure of public opinion on this sensitive subject is an important element in insuring that the system of military conscription is a workable one. For, as Senator Heflin noted, "the opposition to registering women is so widespread and pervasive that if young women were required to register, it might jeopardize the whole registration program." 126 *Cong. Rec.* S1242 (Feb. 7, 1980). Consequently, Congress expressed concern over "unpredictable reactions to the fact of female conscription,"[9] fearing that such reactions might weaken the national resolve.

Given these serious Congressional fears over the acceptability of a gender-neutral draft to the American public, the continuation of the exemption for women was eminently sound. Even granting that sexual roles in our

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[9] *See* p. 18, *supra.*

society are in a process of turmoil and change, Congress is not required to pioneer every social transition, particularly when the nation's military defense needs are at stake. To be sure, a Congressional decision which would affirmatively discriminate against a racial, ethnic or religious minority could not be sustained by this Court simply because it is supported by public opinion. But that is not this case. No disadvantaged group or historically isolated minority is being asked to sacrifice or shoulder an unequal burden. Even the district court here recognized that young males are *not* in need of special protection (Juris. St. App. 16a-17a), and it is that group, not a disadvantaged minority, which is called upon to serve.

National defense is among the highest of the country's priorities. It places a heavy burden upon the shoulders of our Executive and Congressional leaders. Congress has decided, in this instance and at this time in our nation's history, that the societal impact of reversing the centuries-old exemption for women from the draft would have unacceptable consequences for the nation and, consequently, for our military preparedness and national resolve. That judgment of Congress is entitled to great weight in the courts. *Schlesinger v. Ballard,* 419 U.S. 498, 510 (1975); *United States v. O'Brien,* 391 U.S. 367, 377 (1968).

C. The Exemption of Women from Registration and Induction Is Consistent With Encouragement of Women Volunteers.

A fundamental error committed by the court below was its assumption that there is conflict between two totally consistent policies of present law with regard to women's service in the armed forces. The court called it "incongruous" that Congress is expanding the utilization of women in the military while it "endorses legislation

excluding women from the pool of registrants available for induction" (Juris. St. App. 38a-39a). If "military necessity" were, indeed, the sole relevant standard, there would be substantial incongruity in the simultaneous pursuit of these two policies. But Congress' legitimate consideration of other factors makes it eminently reasonable—indeed, compellingly reasonable—for Congress to encourage women *volunteers* while exempting women from compulsory conscription.

The MSSA, from its inception and through succeeding amendments, has required that only males register for possible induction into the armed forces. Although women have never been legally obligated to register and serve, Congress has long authorized and encouraged volunteer service by women in the military, extending even to the opening of the military service academies to women. *See, e.g.*, 14 U.S.C. §182(a) (1976).[10] Indeed, the district court relied heavily in its decision on evidence of the proficiency of women volunteers in the armed forces.

Encouragement of women volunteers does not mean, however, that all women should be subjected involuntarily to possible military service. For the reasons we have previously stated in this brief it is appropriate that women be given the option of serving or not serving the nation in a military capacity.

To give them that option, by means of the MSSA's exemption for women, plainly does not constitute "a badge of inferiority" that "stigmatizes women" (Juris. St. App. 15a). The district court, in characterizing the effect of the law in this way, relied upon recent cases

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[10]Judicial decisions have also expanded opportunities for women who volunteer for service. *E.g., Owens v. Brown*, 455 F.Supp. 291 (D.D.C. 1978).

decided by this Court striking down statutes that benefitted women at the expense of men. *See Wengler v. Druggists Mutual Insurance Co.*, 446 U.S. 142 (1980); *Califano v. Goldfarb*, 430 U.S. 199 (1977); *Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld*, 420 U.S. 636 (1975). But the statutes in none of the cited cases are similar to this statutory scheme, because the federal laws relating to military service encourage the *voluntary* participation of women in the armed forces.

The plaintiffs have filled the record with references to the present and expected increased role of women in the military and to their integration into the service from what had been a separate "women's force." The district court said that "the experience of women in the all volunteer army has been a success story" (Juris. St. App. 38a), and that the "extensive utilization of females in the military . . . will substantially increase" (Juris St. App. 41a). Women have not been "relegate[d] to an inferior status" by a "seemingly well-intended classification" (Juris St. App. 15a), but have been given ample opportunities while being liberated from unsound obligations which have no justification other than superficial even-handedness. There being no intentional or unintentional adverse effect on women because of their exemption from registration and induction, Congress' decision to continue that exemption, based upon the societal impact if it were terminated, is entirely legitimate and compelling.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the judgment of the district court should be reversed, with directions to enter judgment for the appellant.

Respectfully submitted,

NATHAN LEWIN
JAMES E. ROCAP, III
MILLER, CASSIDY,
LARROCA & LEWIN
2555 M Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 293-6400

Attorneys for
Stacey Acker, et al.

United States Department of Justice
Office of the Solicitor General
Washington, D.C. 20530

December 16, 1980

James E. Rocap, III
Miller, Cassidy, Larroca & Lewin
2555 M Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20037

Re: No. 80-251, Rostker v. Goldberg

Dear Mr. Rocap:

You have requested our consent to the filing of an amicus curiae brief in this case on behalf of Stacy Acker, et al. I am happy to consent to that filing.

Sincerely,

Wade H. McCree, Jr.
Solicitor General

cc:

Michael Rodak, Jr., Esqire
Clerk
Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20543

KOHN, SAVETT, MARION & GRAF, P.C.

1214 IVB BUILDING, 1700 MARKET STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19103

(215) 665-9900

HAROLD E KOHN
STUART H SAVETT
DAVID H MARION
BAYARD H GRAF
DONALD L WEINBERG
SAMUEL E KLEIN
DAVID H WEINSTEIN
ROBERT A SWIFT
WAYNE M THOMAS
JOSEPH F RODA
DIANNE M NAST
JAY B COHEN
ELKAN M KATZ
ROBERT J LAROCCA

WASHINGTON OFFICE

KOHN, MILSTEIN & COHEN
1776 K STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
(202) 293-7110

JERRY S. COHEN
HERBERT E. MILSTEIN
MICHAEL D. HAUSFELD
GLEN DEVALERIO
STEVEN J. TOLL
JUDITH M. BAIZER

MEMBERS
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAR

January 6, 1981

James E. Rocap, III, Esquire
Miller, Cassidy, Larroca & Lewin
2555 M Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20037

Re: Rostker v. Goldberg

Dear Mr. Rocap:

This is to inform you that appellees consent to the filing of an amicus brief on behalf of Stacey Acker, et al. The foregoing consent is not meant to, and shall not, constitute any concession on our part that the issues and interests raised in such brief are legitimate legal issues or are properly before the Court.

Very truly yours,

Donald L. Weinberg

DLW:mfp